

School Garden Planning Guide



Build a Team and Plan a Garden

1. Describe why you want to build a school garden, what are your values and goals?

2. Do you have support from the administration and custodians?

Yes No

3. List any teachers, staff, or school community members who may be interested in helping.

Hint: Are there garden clubs, senior centers, master gardeners, or high school groups who might be willing to work with students in the garden?

4. What grade levels or classes will be involved in the garden and will they require their own garden space?

Build a Team and Plan

5. How do you plan to use the garden as an instructional tool and what topics do you want to teach through the garden?

6. How often would you utilize the garden – weekly, monthly, seasonally etc.?

Weekly Monthly Seasonally Special occasions Summer

7. Make a list of people who can help with writing grants, acquiring donations, fund-raising and help build a team of volunteers?

Communication

1. Make a list of people who will help contact groups, organizations or companies to help publicize the school garden.

Hint: Consider the School district, school web site, newsletter, calendar, local government, businesses, newspaper, community groups, and social media such as Facebook and Twitter.

Plan and Design

1. Make a list of materials tools and supplies will you need.

Hint: Are there local farmers or gardeners who might help prepare the site (e.g., provide plowing, manure, or lime)? Is there a local nursery or business that might be willing to “adopt” your program and/or donate gardening tools and supplies, materials for building raised beds, and so on?

Location and Site Analysis

1. Do you have any open, unused space that could be used for a garden?

Yes No

2. Does it have full sunlight for at least six hours a day?

Yes No

3. Is it reasonably level?

Yes No

4. Does it have access to water?

Yes No

5. Is it well drained?

Yes No

6. How healthy is the soil?

Bad Good Great

7. Will you need to test the soil?

Yes No

8. Do you have at least 6 to 12 inches of topsoil?

Yes No

9. What needs to be done to prepare or enhance the soil?

Location and Site Analysis

10. Should you consider raised beds, containers, or SIPs (Sub-irrigated planters) such as an EarthBoxes?

Yes No

11. Will you need to remove asphalt, concrete, fence or grass or install a fence?

Hint: Consider these factors in your budget, schedule and timeline.

Yes No

12. Will you require and have space for a rain barrel, if so, how many?

Yes No #_____ Rain barrels

13. Will you compost or vermicompost? Is there space allocated for this?

Yes No

14. Will you have space for a tool shed or something to store tools?

Yes No

15. Will the garden be it safe, secure, easily accessible, visible and protected from vandalism?

Yes No

Garden Design

1. What type of garden do you want to build?

In-ground Raised bed Container EarthBox type Vertical garden

2. Do you want a central garden theme or will you create small garden areas with multiple themes?

Hint: Garden theme such as vegetable, fruit, herb, butterfly, art, ethnic, sensory etc.

3. List some seeds and plants you are interested in growing.

Hint: Lettuce, tomatoes, green peppers, cucumbers and herbs are easy to grow and provide generous yields.

4. Will it be organic vs. inorganic?

Organic Inorganic

5. Will it be sustainable?

Yes No

6. Do you have plans for a ribbon cutting, harvest festival, garden party or celebration?

Build, Manage and Sustain

1. List people, groups or organizations who will help build the garden.

Hint: Consider teachers, students, families, volunteers, community gardens, clubs, Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, professional contractors etc.

2. Make a list of gardeners, volunteer and custodians and assign weekly and monthly chores to weed, water, maintain compost, fertilize and harvest.

Hint: It's helpful to appoint a coordinator for this task.

3. What tools and materials will you need to build the garden?

Hint: Also include plants, seeds, plant markers, first aid and water

Build, Manage and Sustain

4. Who could help with maintenance of the garden during the summer?

Hint: Consider having families adopt parts of the garden or share the space with neighbors or a community garden.

5. What are the needs and budget for the garden next year? The following years?

Hint: The cost of a 4" X 8" garden bed averages \$100 including plant.

6. What lessons did you learn in building, maintaining and sustaining a school garden?

Education and Program

1. How do you want to incorporate the garden with the school?

Hint: Consider curriculum lessons, nutrition classes, tastings from the garden, cooking classes, harvest meals and celebrations, incorporate produce from the garden into school lunches, extra-curricular activities and community outreach such as food donations, entrepreneurial activities, etc.



Garden Budget Worksheet

Size of School Garden:

_____ of Square feet

Participants:

_____ Teachers # _____ Students # _____ Volunteers

Building the Garden:

Garden Materials

(Containers, plants, soil, seeds, mulch, fertilizer etc.)

\$ _____

Garden Tools

(Hand trowels, shovels, watering cans, buckets, watering wands, rakes, hoses, spade, hoe etc.)

\$ _____

Educational Materials

(Books, journals, curriculum etc.)

\$ _____

Contracted Labor & Construction

(May include removal of trees, fence, asphalt, concrete, grass etc. or installation of new fence)

\$ _____

Garden Based Professional Development

\$ _____

Instructional garden coordinator \$60/hr-

Develops and leads garden based education activities, provides resources and supplies

Garden Consultant \$60/hr

Helps develop garden building plan and coordinates purchase of supplies

Garden Assistant \$25/hr

Assists teachers with their garden activities

Note: The cost of a 4' X 8' cedar raised garden bed including soil, compost and plants is approximately \$100.

Sources: (1) Debbie Kong School Garden Educator (2) Starting a School Garden by Eve Pranis at National Gardening Association, (3) Gardens for Learning: Creating and Sustaining Your School Garden by California School Garden Network